



Testimony of Kimberly A. Lumia
President & Chief Executive Officer
Sharon Hospital

Submitted to the Appropriations Committee

HB 6350, AN ACT CONCERNING THE BUDGET FOR THE
BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2015, AND OTHER PROVISIONS
RELATING TO REVENUE

February 22, 2013

Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Kimberly Lumia; I am President and Chief Executive Officer of Sharon Hospital in Sharon, Connecticut – the only full service community hospital serving the Northwest corner of our state.

It is my pleasure to speak to you this evening on behalf of Sharon Hospital and the thousands of patients that the hospital serves each year.

Governor Malloy's proposed budgetary cuts to Connecticut's hospitals are, in a word, devastating.

If enacted as proposed, Sharon Hospital's funding would be slashed by more than \$2 ½ million. This comes on the heels of the burden of the new provider tax that was implemented just last year, which in the case of our hospital totals another \$2 ½ million.

However, in the case of Sharon Hospital I think it may be important to ensure an important point is made about which you may not be fully aware: While there are 30 hospitals in Connecticut, only one, Sharon Hospital, operates as a for-profit hospital.

That means that we pay a host of taxes – property, income, sales, just to name a few. Last year these totaled nearly \$4 million.

Notwithstanding these financial burdens, Sharon Hospital has moved to greatly modernize its facilities, spending more than \$36 million in just the last several years. The emergency room, birthing center, wound care center, and other important areas of the hospital are all State-of-the Art. While not easy to do in the midst of a difficult recession, the management of Sharon Hospital was determined to make these substantial investments to ensure quality care for the community it serves.

Still, the recent financial pressures faced by Sharon Hospital – particularly the provider tax – have required us to make some unfortunate decisions – cutting 26 positions one year ago.

Ladies and gentlemen, as unfortunate as those job cuts were, the effects of the budget proposal that is currently before you would be much more severe.

Governor Malloy's budget proposal would compel us to start cutting and potentially eliminating programs. There is simply no escaping the fact that programs like our pain management, sleep, wound care, Coumadin, and chemotherapy services would all be vulnerable to potential closure. Even our physician practices would have to be reviewed.

Indeed, while the positions we eliminated last year did not directly affect patient care, these proposed cuts would. And while I do not wish to be alarmist, they would be dire.

You hear about the safety net; well, in Salisbury, Canaan, Kent, Goshen, Cornwall and a dozen other towns in Connecticut – we are it.

Last year we delivered nearly \$1 million in charity care. We tended to over 16,000 emergency room visits and performed 3,000 surgical procedures. And I am immensely proud to say that last year 237 babies were born at Sharon Hospital.

Members of the Appropriations Committee, on behalf of my more than 400 co-workers, I say to you: We are Sharon Hospital; we have been providing vital hospital care to the communities of Northwest Connecticut for over 100 years, and with your support we look forward to doing so for the next 100 years. But we absolutely need your help.

Thank you!